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New Stephen Crane Letters in the Schoberlin Collection

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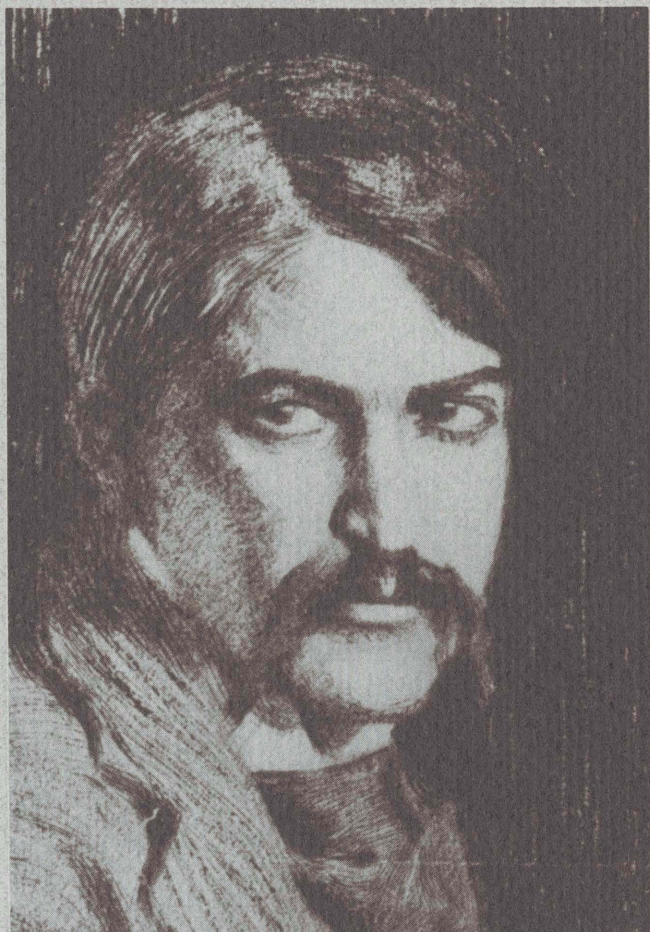
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VOLUME XXI

NUMBER ONE

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New Stephen Crane Letters in the Schoberlin Collection

BY PAUL SORRENTINO AND STANLEY WERTHEIM

Unpublished Crane letters constitute the most significant part of the Melvin H. Schoberlin Stephen Crane Collection.* The collection contains sixty-two letters by Stephen, thirty-nine by Cora (his common-law wife), and five book and album inscriptions. Of those, Cora's letters and forty-eight of the Crane letters have been available only in typed transcripts, and the others until now were unknown. Because the originals show that the transcripts are substantially accurate and because the transcripts were published in the R. W. Stallman and Lillian Gilkes edition of *Stephen Crane: Letters* (1960) or in the Fredson Bowers edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* (1969–76), these letters are not reprinted here. Besides original letters and inscriptions, the Schoberlin Collection contains typed transcripts of previously unpublished Crane letters, including those from the so-called "Thomas Beer Papers". The entire group has been arranged in the following manner: letters 1–19 are in holograph, the text faithfully adhered to; letters 20–25 are printed from unverified transcripts; letters 26–31 are printed from Thomas Beer's typescripts.

By themselves the letters and inscriptions that are reproduced here do not form a coherent narrative; consequently, brief headnotes and footnotes supply the reader with sufficient detail to understand the context of each document.

In January 1888, at the age of sixteen, Crane began attending Claverack College and Hudson River Institute, a co-educational, semi-military high school and junior college in Columbia County, New York, because of his interest in the school's military program. "He loved to play at soldiers from his earliest childhood", his sister-in-

* Stephen Crane's letters are published with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

law Mrs. George Crane recalled. "Most of his playthings were in the form of toy soldiers, guns and the like", and "his fondness for everything military induced his mother to send him to the Claverack Military Academy".

The Claverack experience was idyllic for Crane. He would later characterize it as the happiest period in his life. While there, he had his most intense period of exposure to nineteenth-century English and American literature and the classics, although he never read deeply or widely. He contributed his first signed article, a two-column sketch on the exploits of Henry M. Stanley, the journalist and African explorer, to the school's magazine, *Vidette*; and he fell in love with two redheads, Harriet Mattison and Jennie Pierce. Summers were spent helping his brother Townley collect society gossip along the New Jersey shore for his Asbury Park news agency. Crane's studies were eclectic. Students of the three-year Classical or Academic programs at Claverack were prepared to enter the third year of college. There was also a Commercial Department for boys and girls. The *Thirty Fourth Catalogue of Claverack College and Hudson River Institute* (1888) lists Crane among the Classical students, although he later apparently switched to the Academic curriculum. It is unlikely he adhered to the requirements of either very closely, for when he entered Lafayette College in the fall of 1890, having completed two and a half years at Claverack, he was still only a freshman.

Crane indulged his love of military panoply to the full at Claverack, and he rose rapidly in the ranks of the student battalion, being gazetted captain in the June 1890 issue of *Vidette*. His "perfectly hen-like attitude toward the rank and file" during a prize drill was sardonically described by a classmate, Harvey Wickham. Crane was preparing himself for West Point and a career as a professional soldier, but his older brother William, who had often entertained him with knowledgeable accounts of the Battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, was convinced that there would be no war in Stephen's lifetime and that consequently he would not prosper as an army officer. Crane, therefore, sought a more practical outlet for his ambitions in the mining-engineering course at Lafayette College, but he departed from Claverack with deep regret. Later he would write ambiguously on the reverse of a photograph of the school (in the Schoberlin Collection) that it was "A place around which tender(?) memories cling".



The buildings of Claverack College and Hudson River Institute in Claverack, New York. This is the photograph on the back of which Stephen Crane had written: "A place around which tender(?) memories cling".

1. TO ARMISTEAD BORLAND¹
Inscribed in an autograph album.

You little Annex²— / That would be on a level / With desperados
and the like / Four to one / Is'nt much fun / For the fellow the kids
go to fight / Very sincerely / Your friend / Stephen T. Crane /
N. Y C. / C. C. & H. R. I / April 4, 1889

1. Armistead ("Tommie") Borland, a Claverack College schoolmate from Norfolk, Virginia. In his unpublished biography, "Flagon of Despair: Stephen Crane", which is part of the Schoberlin Collection, Schoberlin quotes a passage that Borland apparently wrote to him: "I was only a kid of fourteen . . . and 'Steve' was my hero and ideal. I must have been somewhat of a nuisance to him always hanging around—sometimes when I was not wanted. I tried to copy him in every way and learned many things, not all for the good of my immortal soul—the rudiments of the great American game of poker and something more than the rudiments of the ways of a man with a maid" (p. v-17).

2. Harvey Wickham, another schoolmate, in "Stephen Crane at College", *American Mercury* 7 (March 1926): 291, reports that by the time Crane arrived at Claverack College, the reputation of the school had declined: "The college, in fact, had become all absorbed in the Hudson River Institute—a mere boarding school. . . . and the Institute itself was being eaten into by an annex, which was not up to the level of even a high school. Old Claverack was dead."

2. TO ARMISTEAD BORLAND

Inscribed in an autograph album (see illustration on page 4).

Ah! Tommie! when you / get back to Dixie, remember / how often
you used to / be fired out of #117¹ and / how you always came /
directly in again / Your sincere friend / Stephen Crane /
C C & H R. I / March 10, 1890

1. Schoberlin writes that Crane was assigned at Claverack “to cubicle 117 ‘Flack Alley,’ as the third-floor corridor of the boys’ dormitory was commonly called” (“Flagon”, p. v–5). The corridor was named after the Reverend Arthur H. Flack, who succeeded his father as president of the school.

3. TO ARMISTEAD BORLAND

My dear Tommie:—

I was delighted to hear from you. So poor Tommie is in hell is he? Never mind, my boy, I remember when you used to cuss at Claverack and swear it was the damndest hole on earth. I really suppose you would rail at your lot if you were placed on the right-hand side of God almighty in Heaven with nine angels to fan you and a caravan heavily loaded with mint-julips, in the immediate fore-ground. Go to, Thomas, thou art a bird, a regular damned bird.

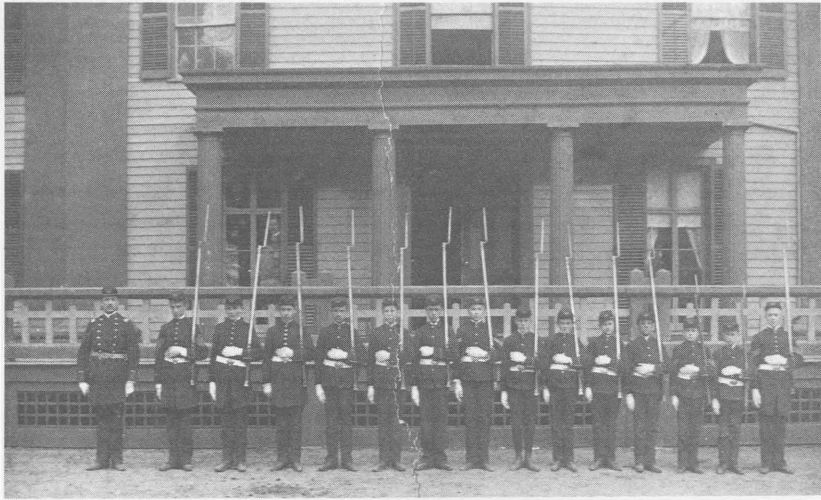
So you lack females of the white persuasion, do you? How unfortunate! And how extraordinary! I never thought that the world could come to such a pass that you would lack females, Thomas! You indeed must be in a God forsaken country.

Just read these next few lines in a whisper:—I—I think black is quite good—if—if its yellow and young.

I will proceed directly to write to Jones, P. He was a nice boy. He and Tommie were the only two kids I ever cared much about.

Perhaps, you have noticed this pen is damnably bad and that I am writing this letter with great difficulty. You are very right in that case. Therefore appreciate this more.

Pete¹ said she would like to hear from you. Why don’t you write to her? “#75 Sip Ave, Jersey City Heights.”



The cadets of Company B, Claverack College, ca. 1889. Stephen Crane stands second from the left. Armistead Borland stands second from the right.

I heard from Johns² by the same mail that brought your letter. He is hanging out in Ypsilanti Michigan, wherever in hell that may be. Send me Red Foster's³ address if you have it.

Take care of yourself, always assure yourself of my distinguished consideration and you will be very happy. Good-bye and Good luck and nice girls to you, my dear Tommie

Always yours affectionately
S. C.

Port Jervis NY

Feb 16, 92

—Write often—

1. Crane's friend, Phebe English.
2. H. B. Johns, nicknamed "Red Sioux" because he came from Sioux City, Iowa.
3. F. H. Foster of New York City.

Following his return from a trip to the West and Mexico for the Bacheller, Johnson & Bacheller newspaper syndicate, Crane spent the summer of 1895 at his brother Edmund's house in Hartwood,

New York, a tiny country village in Sullivan County, only a few miles from Port Jervis. Hartwood, where Crane lived intermittently in 1895–96, was the closest thing to a permanent home he would have in the United States. Another brother, William Howe Crane, was an attorney who lived in Port Jervis, and here Crane renewed his childhood friendship with Louis C. Senger, Jr., an artist who had served as the model for the Tall Man of the Sullivan County sketches. Senger helped Crane edit and put into print a mock newspaper, the *Pike County Puzzle*, based upon their camping experience with other friends at Twin Lakes near Milford, Pennsylvania, during the summer of 1894.

4. TO LOUIS SENGER

Letterhead: "Cooke's European Hotel . . . St. Louis, Mo."

[St. Louis, 30 January 1895]

Say, Senger, write to me in care of the State Journal, Lincoln, Nebraska, will you?¹ Any time within ten days. After that, at the New Orleans Times-Democrat office, care Mr Marriion Baker
Crane

1. In the early part of 1895, Crane travelled to the West and Mexico as a feature writer for the Bacheiler, Johnson & Bacheiler newspaper syndicate. In February he met Willa Cather in the office of the *Nebraska State Journal*.

5. TO LOUIS SENGER

Hartwood, N. Y.

Nov 23d [1895]

My dear Louis: I am about to finish my new novel¹—in eight days I think—and if you find yourself with a good deal of time, I would like to have you read it. Up here, I miss some little public to impale. Let me know if you possess any leisure and I will send or bring the thing to you.

I see you escaped with six dollars soon after election. Heaven guard us from such robbers.

Yours as always
Stephen Crane.

1. *The Third Violet*.

6. TO LOUIS SENDER

Hartwood—Nov. 25th. [1895]

My dear Louis: You are a very amiable person. I will send the novel down by messenger to Will Parshal's office. I expect to finish it this week. As to your good invitation to come see you—I am expecting to break out of my asylum on Dec 17th, when I go to Buffalo for a few days.¹ When I return, I shall be glad to take a moment's rest in Port Jervis. Adios.

Yours as ever
Stephen Crane.

1. Crane went to Buffalo to attend a banquet given in his honor by Elbert Hubbard and the Society of the Philistines at the Genesee Hotel on 19 December 1895.

7. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Hartwood, N. Y., 7 January 1896]

Dear L: Hope you will keep me posted on the Tribune's acrobatics.¹ Have sent for Munsey's.² The new novel accepted by Appleton's on Saturday. To be brought out in April or June.

Yours
S. C.

1. The *New York Tribune's* unflattering review of *The Red Badge of Courage* appeared on 13 October 1895, p. 24. In its "Literary Notes" column on 29 December 1895, p. 22, the *Tribune* vituperatively attacked the Society of the Philistines for tendering Crane a testimonial dinner: "But the Crane dinner redirects attention to the head and front [sic] of Philistine offending, the cause of it all, the irrepressible mediocrity which insists upon affronting public intelligence though the heavens cry out for shame. We had thought the 'Philistines' would help to quench the Minor Poet. Instead they give him a dinner and sing his praises to the moon!"

2. The "Literary Chat" column, *Munsey's Magazine* 14 (January 1896): 503–4, deplores the excesses of Crane's style, especially in *The Black Riders*. "But in 'The Red Badge' there is a more substantial quality than mere eccentricity. His writings, to be sure, are an acquired taste. One must become hardened to having everything described as 'murder red,' and having one's composure startled by lurid similes. This achieved, there comes a realization that Mr. Crane possesses a power of his own, a forceful knowledge of truth, and an ability to portray it forcefully." The column concludes that Crane is "one of the most original writers of the day".

At the height of his fame, following the publication of *The Red Badge of Courage* in October 1895, Crane found himself besieged with requests for photographs and the object of attention from clubs and societies that solicited his membership. The five postal cards he sent to Senger on the same day reveal Crane's occasional playfulness. His letters contain few touches of humor.

8. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Port Jervis, N. Y., 11 January 1896]

Dear Louis: Will you kindly loan your photograph of me to The Bookman?¹ Please send it to James MacArthur c/o, Dodd Mead and Co., Fifth Ave., New York City.

Yours faithfully
Stephen Crane

1. *The Bookman* 2 (February 1896): 470 used one of the snapshots made by Senger's cousin, the artist Corwin Knapp Linson, in preparation for his oil portrait of Crane now hanging in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia.

9. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Port Jervis, 11 January 1896]

Dear L: If you dont send the photograph, I will do you.

Very truly yours
Stephen Crane.

10. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Port Jervis, 11 January 1896]

Dear Louis: Have you sent it?

Sincerely yours
Stephen Crane

11. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Port Jervis, 11 January 1896]

Dear Louis: Why dont you send it?

Faithfully yours
Stephen Crane

12. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Port Jervis, 11 January 1896]

Dear Louis: Why the dickens have you not sent the picture to MacArthur, c/o Dodd, Mead and Co., New York City?

Yours
Stephen Crane

13. TO LOUIS SENDER

The Cosmos Club
Washington, D. C.
March 24th [1896]

Dear Louisa: I forgot to tell you that I have come to Washington for a long stay.¹ Otherwise I would be happy to hear the S.U.² glee club. So glad the young woman has all her mothers and fathers. Give my regards to the Van Ettens. I have heard nothing from Williams but have written him again. Excuse this haste.

Yours
S. C.

1. In mid-March 1896, Crane went to Washington, D.C., to study the political life of the city in preparation for a novel to be published by S. S. McClure. Finding Washington society impenetrable, he returned to New York at the beginning of April, giving up all thoughts of the novel.

2. Syracuse University.

14. TO VIOLA ALLEN¹

165 West 23d
Thursday—[late April 1896]

My dear Miss Allen: As you permit, I will very gladly come on the evening of the first Sunday in May. Is that right?

Yours sincerely
Stephen Crane

1. A schoolmate from Claverack who had written Crane. He replied in March and sent her a copy of *The Red Badge of Courage*.

15. TO LUCIUS L. BUTTON¹

Inscribed in a copy of *A Souvenir and a Medley*.²

[after 1 May 1896]

Go to hell! C.

1. Lucius Lucine Button was one of the medical students who shared lodgings with Crane during the fall and winter of 1892–93 in the boarding house on Avenue A that they referred to as the “Pendennis Club”. Button received one of the first of the privately printed copies of *Maggie* inscribed by Crane.

2. One of three pamphlets printed to commemorate the banquet given in Crane’s honor by the Society of the Philistines.

16. TO E. S. GOODHUE

Hartwood.,
Sullivan Co.,
New York State
Aug 3^d, 96.

E. S. Goodhue, M.D

Dear sir: I acknowledge with gratitude your kind favor of July 3d in which you inform me that I have been made an honorary member of the Kanai Kodak Club¹ and I accept the distinction with many thanks. Cordial greetings to all Kodak Klubers.

Very truly yours
Stephen Crane

1. A reading and photography club on Kauai, Hawaii. Crane misread Goodhue’s handwriting and wrote “Kanai” instead of “Kauai”.

Crane’s settling down with Cora Taylor at Ravensbrook, Oxted, Surrey, England, in June 1897, following his reporting of the Greco-Turkish War for the *New York Journal* and the McClure syndicate, was an act not of expatriation but of exile. Stephen’s brothers and their prudish wives would not have welcomed the “hostess” of a Jacksonville pleasure house to Hartwood or Port Jervis, whereas the

English literary group among whom Crane settled had a less stringent moral outlook. Harold Frederic, Ford Madox Ford, and H. G. Wells lived with women who were not their wives, and Joseph Conrad was tolerant, if not approving, of deviations from Victorian morality.

Crane's residence in England was interrupted for some seven months while he covered the Cuban and Puerto Rican campaigns of the Spanish-American War as a correspondent for the *New York World* and, subsequently, the *New York Journal*. A month after his return in January 1899, the Cranes moved to Brede Place in Northiam, Sussex, a rambling, decayed country manor built in the fourteenth century and restored during Tudor and Elizabethan times. During Stephen's absence in Cuba, Cora had leased it for a nominal sum from Moreton Frewen and his wife, Clara, a sister of Lady Randolph Churchill. Here the Cranes lived until shortly before Stephen's death in Badenweiler, Germany, on 5 June 1900.

17. TO LOUIS SENDER

[Ravensbrook] Nov 8. [1897]

My dear Louis: These marital gymnastics on the part of Linson must be hair-raising. Call him off. The halo cant be used as a rim for the domestic stove-lid. Carry him out. It is too much.

Can not you send me a proof of the Scribner's tale? I can have so many people here read it and all that. I congratulate you frankly, completely. It is a pretty sure sign. Blaze away. I heard from Lorrie¹ recently. He is wading around knee-deep in the belief that I am in New York

Your friend
S. C.

c/o W. Heineman
21 Bedford St: W. C.
London

1. Frederic M. Lawrence, a Delta Upsilon brother of Crane at Syracuse University who wrote a valuable reminiscence published recently as *The Real Stephen Crane*, ed. Joseph Katz (Newark, New Jersey: Newark Public Library, 1980).

18. TO LOUIS SENDER

Inscribed in a copy of a German edition of *Maggie*¹ (Leipzig: Georg H. Wigand's Verlag, 1897).

[1897]

Dear Louis: Have this from S. C.

1. Two editions of Dora Landé's translation, *Maggie: das Strassenkind* (published by G. H. Wigand and E. Fiedler) appeared in 1897, the subtitle based upon the English *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. This was the only work of Crane translated into German during his lifetime.

19. TO CAMILLA INGALLS

Inscribed in a copy of *Pictures of War*.

To Camilla / With affectionate, always / affectionate, remembrances / of the author. / Stephen Crane / Brede Place / June 8, 1899.

Besides the holograph items, the Schoberlin Collection also includes typed transcripts of Crane letters. They are more revealing and thus more important to scholars than some of the holographs in the collection. One difficulty in working with a transcript is that if an error appears, there is no way of knowing whether the writer or the transcriber committed it. Consequently, the following letters are offered as they appear in typescript, complete with bracketed material but excluding the explanatory notes that Schoberlin himself typed for his own use. Nos. 20–25 consist of copies of letters that Schoberlin collected from relatives or friends of Crane.

20. TO POST WHEELER¹

143 East 23d St., N.Y.C.

Dec 22d, 94

My dear Wheeler:—I rejoiced tonight in getting your letter down at the Press office. I had not known which quarter of the globe contained you. Of all things I did not expect to find you incarcerated

in Newark, where, by the way, I myself was jailed for a certain period—one week, in fact. You apall [sic] me by mentioning a couple of bottles. If I was sure you meant beer no one would reply with more fervent and fraternal joy but I have a damnable suspicion that you mean wine. Know then, my old companion, that I am living upon the glory of literature and not upon it's [sic] pay. Nevertheless we tramped too many leagues of Jersey sand together to let this matter of beer or wine separate us and if during the week that begins 1895 you have time to spare, let me know and I will gladly come to Newark to resume our old acquaintance and, by the same token, we will manage oftener to dine in New York. As far as the literary club [the Lantern Club] goes, you will be gladly welcomed, I am sure. My opinion is considered very valuable by my fellow-members since I am usually very chary about giving it.² I hope to see you soon as a member of our little clan and I know you will like it. Drop me a line and in the meantime know me to be

Yours very sincerely
Stephen Crane

1. Post Wheeler (1869–1956), journalist and diplomat, was editor of the *New York Press*, 1896–1900, and later served in American embassies in Tokyo, St. Petersburg, Rome, Stockholm, London, and Rio de Janeiro. Wheeler and Crane were acquainted as children through their mothers, who were active in the W.C.T.U. Wheeler was a charter member of the Lantern Club on William Street in New York, a genial group of newspapermen, editors, and journalists presided over by Irving Bacheller.

2. This seems to be a reference to some Lantern Club occasion; but according to the Club's perpetual president, Irving Bacheller, Crane did not become a member until his return from Mexico in the spring of 1895 (*From Stores of Memory* [New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1938], 111). In his reminiscences Post Wheeler maintains that he was one of the founding members of the Lantern Club and intimates that Crane joined later (*Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* [Garden City, Long Island: Doubleday, 1955], 98).

21. TO POST WHEELER

Hartwood
Nov 5 [1895]

My dear Post: It is good of you to remember me so often. I saw the Town Topics review. Didn't I show it to you at the Club. I am working out-of-sight. Novel¹ third done.

Yours as ever
Stephen Crane

1. *The Third Violet*.

22. TO LOUIS SENDER

[10 December 1895]
Hartwood
Tuesday night

My dear Louisa:

I have arrived in Port Jervis. This is supposed to resemble one of Napoleon's previous bulletins. Come and see me.

Yours
S. C.

23. TO DEWITT MILLER¹

The Cosmos Club
Washington, D. C.
March 24, 1896

Mr. Dewitt Miller,

Dear Sir:

Maggie was privately printed some years ago and I have no copy at hand. The new edition will be brought out by Appleton & Co.

Sincerely yours,
Stephen Crane

1. Jahu Dewitt Miller (1857-1911) was a noted lyceum lecturer and book collector. Crane may have met him at Pennington Seminary. Miller was graduated from there in 1881 and lectured at the school at least once annually from 1887 to 1890. Miller eventually managed to obtain a copy of the 1893 *Maggie*, had it rebound, and sent it to Crane for his inscription.

24. TO LUCIUS L. BUTTON

Hartwood
Sullivan Co. N. Y.

Nov. 3d '96

My dear Button: When I returned from Mexico, I tried to look you up in New York but you had incontinently vanished. I heard latter [sic] that you were in Rochester so I fire this small note in that direction or perhaps I had better try Norwich. I think, upon consideration, I will. I am up here writing another book. Let me know where you are and when you intend going to New York so we may clash.

Yours as ever
Stephen Crane

25. CORA CRANE TO POST WHEELER

TELEGRAMS—CRANE, BREDE HILL
STATION—RYE

BREDE PLACE,
BREDE,
NORTHIAM,
SUSSEX.
England
Jan. 24th 1900

Dear Mr. Post Wheeler:

I am writing you for my husband. It is almost impossible to get him to write letters and so, now, his friends are good enough to get their news of him and from him, through me.

He wishes me to say that he has seconded your nomination at the Authors Club.

Stephen longs for South Africa but he was really too wretched in health after Cuba to go out so soon again.¹ I pray he may never go again as war-correspondent. We may take a trip to the Cape after the war is over.

Curtis Brown² has been to see us at Brede Place. We hope to have the good fortune to entertain you under the old roof-tree some day.

Stephen is now in good health and spirits and is writing an Irish

Romance³ over which he is taking great joy. He wants you to be good enough to write him your news and to be satisfied with this one-sided sort of correspondence.

With our best wishes for 1900 believe me

Very Sincerely Yours

Cora Crane

1. While Crane was in Cuba reporting the Spanish-American War, his health deteriorated seriously because of the climate and the poor living conditions. Nevertheless, upon his return to England he wanted to travel to South Africa to report the Boer War.

2. Formerly Sunday editor of the *New York Press* and at this time a literary agent in London.

3. *The O'Ruddy*.

The following group of six letters consists of Thomas Beer's type-scripts of letters from Crane at Brede. Some of these were copied from originals in Beer's possession before he wrote his biography. Others were evidently obtained after the biography had appeared in 1923. According to his sister Alice, the original letters were returned to their owners shortly after he had transcribed them. Scholars owe their preservation in part to Schoberlin, whose copies were sent to him by Alice Beer. These letters are especially significant for their comments upon such other writers as Harold Frederic, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. While the originals of the letters in the Thomas Beer Papers have never surfaced, their provenance is considerably better than many of those quoted in Beer's sparsely documented biography, which contains much of what still passes for the basic facts of Crane's life.

26. TO WILLIAM HOWE CRANE

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.
August 10 [1899]

Dear Will:

As to leaving here before the beginning of March I can't say that we look at it any too cordially. The rumpus about H.¹ continues. As I have told you he had enemies. He did not kill himself and if his ladylove killed him she picked out one of those roundabout Sherlock Doyle ways of doing it. It is simply too easy to call a man you don't like a suicide. Mrs. Frederic² loved H. maybe. She has taken precious little trouble to put him right with people since May. Neither do I much like Mr. James'³ manner. He professed to be er, er, er much attached to H. and now he has shut up like a clam. Do you not think that men like Robert⁴ and me who were close to H and knew how sane he was should take some trouble to shut this thing up and off? I shall certainly not come until I have done what I can.

Yours,
S. C.

Thanks for check.

1. Harold Frederic died on 19 October 1898, having suffered a stroke the previous August. Following his death, his mistress, Kate Lyon, and the Christian Science practitioner she had called in to treat him were arrested for manslaughter.

2. Frederic's wife, Grace.

3. Henry James.

4. Robert Barr.

27. TO (ARNOLD) HENRY SANFORD BENNETT¹

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.

[ca. 13 August 1899]

Dear Bennett:

Am sending this up by Karl [Harriman]² who has to see a dentist or a barkeep or a doctor. Get me the other Wells book. Wells is coming down and will want to know if I read it. *Wheels of Chance*³ or some such name. Gave me a copy and I lost it. You might bring your sister next Thursday if she could stand it. Some pretty wild Indians coming. Might not like them. Mrs. Crane and I would like to have both of you of course. You are wrong about Hueffer.⁴ I admit he is patronizing. He patronized his family. He patronizes Conrad.⁵ He will end up by patronizing God who will have to get used to it and they will be friends. Enclosed is some of that fifty. Are you people related to E. Arnold Bennett? Give Karl a drink.

S. Crane

1. Crane's Canadian friend who had given him a guided tour of Paris in April 1897.

2. Karl Edwin Harriman (1875–1935), a young American journalist who visited the Cranes and later wrote sentimental, idealized accounts of their life at Brede Place.

3. H. G. Wells, *The Wheels of Chance: A Holiday Adventure* (1896).

4. Ford Madox Hueffer (1873–1939), English critic and novelist who changed his Teutonic surname to Ford after World War I, was a neighbor of Crane at nearby Limpsfield.

5. Joseph Conrad.

28. TO JOHN¹

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.

August [ca. 15, 1899]

Dear John:

Please have the kindness to keep your mouth shut about my health in front of Mrs. Crane hereafter. She can do nothing for me and I am too old to be nursed. It is all up with me but I will not have her scared. For some funny woman's reason, she likes me. Mind this.

S.

1. Possibly John Scott-Stokes, a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk who initiated a committee, co-chaired by Cora, to raise money for the benefit of the children of Harold Frederic and Kate Lyon.

29. TO (ARNOLD) HENRY SANFORD BENNETT

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.

August 29 [1899]

Dear Bennett:

The thin man is a Bassett Holmes. He does look like Hueffer. Comes I think from Cornwall somewhere. Met him in a whore-house in New York when we were kids. The other fellow is a friend of Karl Harriman. Ghost of an idea what he does, is, or goes to. Sorry Miss Bennett was so bored. About Wilde¹ and his troubles a mere stranger and runaway dog like me can't be supposed to care. I met him once. We stood and looked at each other and he bleated like a sheep. With those bad manners that are so awfully much mine I laughed in his face. He tried to borrow money from Dick Davis² when he was being tried after insulting Davis all across London. Something pretty poor in him. And I owe my brothers too much money to bother about helping with subscriptions for a mil-

dewed chump like Wilde. Blood, etc. If Harris and the rest of Wilde's friends really want to help him they ought to send him express to Weir Mitchell³ or some specialist in his kind of malady. Perhaps it is because I lived on borrowed money and ate in lunch-wagons when I was trying to be someone that these magnified sinners in good duds bore me so. That isn't what Conrad would call a sentiment of generosity but it is mine. If Conrad has any French blood in him I don't know of it. He is, I think, a pure Polish gent.

Tea at James's. My God how does he stand these bores who pester him. Mrs. Humphrey Ward was there. What an old cow! She has no more mind than a president. Nice to us, though. Feeling vile. Am asked to lecture on the 20th. Hoot, mon! Robert says I ought to. All I ought to do right now is pay some of my debts. My charities begin in the right pants pocket.

Yours,
S. C.

1. Oscar Wilde.

2. Richard Harding Davis (1864–1916), Crane's chief rival as star war correspondent in the Greco-Turkish and Spanish-American Wars.

3. Silas Weir Mitchell (1829–1914), American neurologist specializing in nervous disorders. Mitchell was also a poet and novelist. His most enduring work of fiction, *Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker* (1898), was a story of the American Revolution.

30. TO GEORGE WYNDHAM¹

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.

[ca. 10 September 1899]

Dear Wyndham:

The invitation reads for September 20 and I may be feeling better by then and come to town. At present I feel like hell. This fistula or vistula or whatever they call it drives me mad. I can't ride. Neither could I promise you or Pink² or anyone to write this paper even for a good cause. I am no believer in your general charities. A general charity is about as useful as a wormeaten blanket for two men. Someone should get some warmth out of it. Usually everybody gets a little irritation. Hope is the most vacuous emotion

of mankind. Have been flower-showing. Jesus! What a diversion. The boy you met here has gone to Germany. What do you know about the Black Forest there? I mean as a health resort? The truth is that Cuba libre just about liberated me from this base blue world. The clockwork is juggling badly. I have had a lot of idiotic company all summer.

S. C.

1. British Undersecretary of State for War, who had written a highly laudatory essay on *The Red Badge of Courage*, "A Remarkable Book", *New Review* 14 (January 1896): 30–40; retitled "An Appreciation" and reprinted as the introduction to *Pictures of War* (1898).

2. James B. Pinker, Crane's literary agent.

31. TO (ARNOLD) HENRY SANFORD BENNETT

Brede Place,
Brede,
Northiam,
Sussex.
[23 May 1900]

Dear Bennett:

Mrs. Crane writes this at my dictation. We are starting for Dover in the morning.¹ My condition is probably known to you. The wine arrived. Many thanks. I want to say something about the Civil List. As I understand it, the fact of having been born outside England does not exclude a man from being taken care of. I have Conrad very much on my mind just now. Garnett² does not think it likely that his writing will ever be popular outside the ring of men who write. He is poor and a gentleman and proud. His wife is not strong and they have a kid. If Garnett should ask you to help pull wires for a place on the Civil List for Conrad please do me the last favor of talking about it to that relative of yours who has something to say about these things. I am sure you will.

Yours,
S. C.

1. The Cranes crossed the English Channel at Dover en route to Germany.
2. Edward Garnett, an English literary critic.